

Morning Worship

Sunday, September 12th, 2021

The way of the kingdom is the way of seeking love. Jesus makes that clear in the parable of the Prodigal Son. The older brother refused to enter the father's welcome home party for the returning prodigal. In him Jesus personifies the attitude of the Pharisees. They, like the heartless older brother, are proud of their self-righteous service. Like him, they have no understanding of the father's joy in recovering the lost. They would not eat with tax-collectors and sinners, and faulted Jesus for doing so.... But Jesus knows the joy of heaven over one sinner who repents. In the parable of the Prodigal Son, Jesus steps off-stage and replaces himself with a Pharisee. The full force of the parable comes when we reverse that substitution. What should the older brother have done? Jesus, the true older Brother, not only sits with prodigals at heaven's feast, but comes seeking them down the roads of far countries to find them in their pig-pens. The gospel itself is the story of the seeking Savior who knows the Father's love. If mission is lost, the gospel is lost.

— Edmund P. Clowney

Behold Our God and Father

Call to Worship

Romans 15:5-7

May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

Behold Our God

Who has held the oceans in his hand?

Who has numbered every grain of sand?

Kings and nations tremble at his voice; all creation rises to rejoice:

Behold our God seated on his throne: come let us adore him

Behold our King nothing can compare: come let us adore him!

Who has given counsel to the Lord? Who can question any of his Words?

Who can teach the One who knows all things?

Who can fathom all his wondrous deeds? *Chorus*

Who has felt the nails upon his hands, bearing all the guilt of sinful man?

God eternal humbled to the grave; Jesus, Savior risen now to reign! *Chorus*

Prayer of Invocation

We ask God's presence to enable us to worship him as we ought.

We Humbly Confess Our Sins Against the Father

Call to Confession

Luke 15:18-20

I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.” And he arose and came to his father.

Prayer of Confession

(adapted from *The Valley of Vision*)

O God of grace,

You have imputed my sin to my substitute, and have imputed his righteousness to my soul, clothing me with a bridegroom’s robe, decking me with jewels of holiness. But in my Christian walk I am still in rags; my best prayers are stained with sin; my penitential tears are so much impurity; my confessions of wrong are so many aggravations of sin; my receiving the Spirit is tainted with selfishness.

I need to repent of my repentance. I need my tears to be washed. I have no robe to bring to cover my sins, no loom to weave my own righteousness. I am always standing clothed in filthy garments and by grace am always receiving change of raiment. I am always going into the far country, and always returning home as a prodigal, always saying Father, forgive me, and you are always bringing forth the best robe. Every morning let me wear it, every evening return in it, go out to the day’s work in it, be married in it, be wound in death in it, stand before the great white throne in it, and enter heaven in it shining as the sun.

Grant me never to lose sight of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, the exceeding righteousness of salvation, the exceeding glory of Christ, the exceeding beauty of holiness, and the exceeding wonder of grace. Amen.

Silent Prayers of Confession

Assurance of Pardon

Luke 15:20-24

But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.'

May the Mind of Christ My Savior

May the mind of Christ, my Savior, live in me from day to day,
By his love and pow'r controlling all I do and say.

May the word of God dwell richly in my heart from hour to hour,
So that all may see I triumph only through his pow'r.

May the peace of God, my Father, Rule my life in ev'rything,
That I may be calm to comfort sick and sorrowing.

May the love of Jesus fill me as the waters fill the sea.
Him exalting, self abasing, this is victory.

May I run the race before me, strong and brave to face the foe,
Looking only unto Jesus as I onward go.

May his beauty rest upon me as I seek the lost to win,
and may they forget the channel, seeing only him.

Confession of Faith

The Westminster Confession of Faith 26.1

All saints, that are united to Jesus Christ their Head, by His Spirit, and by faith, have fellowship with Him in His graces, sufferings, death, resurrection, and glory: and, being united to one another in love, they have communion in each other's gifts and graces, and are obliged to the performance of such duties, public and private, as do conduce to their mutual good, both in the inward and outward man.

Pastoral Prayer

Our Father Speaks to Us Through His Word

Scripture Reading

Philemon

Paul, a prisoner for Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother,

To Philemon our beloved fellow worker ² and Apphia our sister and Archippus our fellow soldier, and the church in your house:

³ Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

⁴ I thank my God always when I remember you in my prayers, ⁵ because I hear of your love and of the faith that you have toward the Lord Jesus and for all the saints, ⁶ and I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective for the full knowledge of every good thing that is in us for the sake of Christ. ⁷ For I have derived much joy and comfort from your love, my brother, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you.

⁸ Accordingly, though I am bold enough in Christ to command you to do what is required, ⁹ yet for love's sake I prefer to appeal to you—I, Paul, an old man and now a prisoner also for Christ Jesus— ¹⁰ I appeal to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I became in my imprisonment. ¹¹ (Formerly he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful to you and to me.) ¹² I am sending him back to you, sending my very heart. ¹³ I would have been glad to keep him with me, in order that he might serve me on your behalf during my imprisonment for the gospel, ¹⁴ but I preferred to do nothing without your consent in order that your goodness might not be by compulsion but of your own accord. ¹⁵ For this perhaps is why he was parted from you for a while, that you might have him back forever, ¹⁶ no longer as a bondservant but more than a bondservant, as a beloved brother—especially to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.

¹⁷ So if you consider me your partner, receive him as you would receive me. ¹⁸ If he has wronged you at all, or owes you anything, charge that to my account. ¹⁹ I, Paul, write this with my own hand: I will repay it—to say nothing of your owing me even your own self. ²⁰ Yes, brother, I want some benefit from you in the Lord. Refresh my heart in Christ.

²¹ Confident of your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say. ²² At the same time, prepare a guest room for me, for I am hoping that through your prayers I will be graciously given to you.

²³ Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends greetings to you, ²⁴ and so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my fellow workers.

²⁵ The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

Sermon

“Refreshments Will Be Served”

Reverend Jim Weidenaar, Harvest USA, Pittsburgh

The Father Invites You to Feast With His Son by Faith

The Lord’s Supper

All baptized Christians who trust in Christ alone as their Savior and Lord, who are communicant members of a Bible-believing church, and who seek strength and grace to live more faithfully to Christ are invited to participate. The cups with lighter liquid contain grape juice, the darker liquid is wine. The darker bread in the paper cup in the center of the plate is gluten-free. While communion is being served, please feel free to join in song or meditate quietly on Christ’s sacrifice.

Song of Preparation:

Jesus Paid It All

I hear the Savior say, your strength indeed is small
Child of weakness, watch and pray, find in me your all in all.
*Jesus paid it all, all to him I owe,
Sin had left a crimson stain, he washed it white as snow.*

Lord, now indeed I find your power and yours alone,
Can change the leper’s spots and melt the heart of stone. *Chorus*

For nothing good have I whereby thy grace to claim,
I’ll wash my garments white in the blood of Calvary’s Lamb. *Chorus*

And when before thy throne I stand in him complete,
“Jesus died my soul to save,” my lips shall still repeat! *Chorus*

Celebration of the Lord's Supper

Song of Response:

We Are God's People

We are God's people, the chosen of the Lord,
Born of his Spirit, established by his Word;
Our cornerstone is Christ alone, and strong in him we stand:
O let us live transparently and walk heart to heart and hand in hand.

We are God's loved ones, the Bride of Christ our Lord,
For we have known it, the love of God outpoured;
Now let us learn how to return the gift of love once given:
O let us share each joy and care, and live with a zeal that pleases Heaven.

We are the Body of which the Lord is Head,
Called to obey him, now risen from the dead;
He wills us be a family, diverse yet truly one:
O let us give our gifts to God, and so shall his work on earth be done.

We are a temple, the Spirit's dwelling place,
Formed in great weakness, a cup to hold God's grace;
We die alone, for on its own each ember loses fire:
Yet joined in one the flame burns on to give warmth and light, and to inspire.

Benediction

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